
**THE FRUITS OF PARENTAL DISOBEDIENCE THROUGH ROBINSON CRUSOE BY
DANIEL DEFOE**

Ibourahima Boro Alidou Razakou
University Of Parakou, Benin – (00229) 97873668

ABSTRACT

Human societies are structured and organized according to codes and norms. Each actor has a specific duty and a role to play. Parents have the obligation to teach and educate children. Children in their turn should respect and obey not only their parents but also elders the society. It sometimes happens that for some reasons children disobey their parents and consequently face some life problems afterwards. The main objective of this paper is the draw the attention of young men on the importance of obedience and the necessity to obey and respect elders in general and parents in particular. The study put a particular stress on disobedience through the character of Robinson Crusoe in Robinson Crusoe by Daniel Defoe.

Key Words: Fruits, Disobedience, Robinson Crusoe, Daniel Defoe.

INTRODUCTION

Let us dare to break the silence!

At a time when relativism is rife and tends to dominate the universal understanding on the issue of parental disobedience, the urgency would be to awaken dormant consciences. We subscribe to it without much trouble. Because this phenomenon seems to be passed over in silence while it is not without drawbacks. It is therefore enough to examine various opinions especially that of writers to be convinced of its numerous controversies. The issue of parental disobedience is so important to reconsider and locate it in time. Because, to tell the truth, it seems to be worrying than it has been. Because it has reached proportions more or less frightening. What is parental disobedience? What are the consequences of parental disobedience? The main aim of the paper is to stress on of parental disobedience and its consequences with a focus on *Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe.

Conceptual clarification

The word «disobedience» comes from the verb «disobey ». According to the dictionary available under CC BY -SA3.0 license, " disobeying " means not to obey, to refuse to obey someone, either by doing what is forbidden or by not doing what is ordered. In one word, it is refusing to submit to parental authority. When we apply this word to children, adolescents, and young men, we can see the refusal to comply with the will of the parents and to override a council that is dear to them. Disobedience is considered as a reprehensible behavior that can

create problems between parents and children, Disobedience is forbidden even by religion confessions.

STUDY METHODS

This research work is a documentary research. I went through books and past works dealing with the issue parental disobedience. I find it necessary to get students point of view on such a topic. I have elaborated a series of questionnaires I have randomly addressed young students from secondary schools. They are about 200 students selected in the city of Parakou in the Northern part of Benin. The above method has been used taking into account my understanding of the novel under study. The research work does not cover all the aspects of disobedience. It is specifically about parental disobedience and consequences. It based on a closer analysis of *Robinson Crusoe* of the famous British writer, Daniel Defoe.

STUDY RESULTS

Robinson Crusoe is a fictionalized novel of Robinson's adventure written by Daniel Defoe. The novel is published in 1719 as his masterpiece. Many useful life lessons themes were developed in the work. I particularly oriented my research on disobedience and its consequences, as I have perceived it through my reading and analysis of the novel.

Analysis of the phenomenon of parental disobedience in literature

If there is a period of human life in which the phenomenon of disobedience is most noticeable, it is at the adolescence age. Indeed, youth is a crucial moment of every man life when he thinks life is only made of what he thinks or believe. It is a moment when young men seem be engaged in crazy actions. They would like to affirm their existence and would like elders and parents to let them do whatever they like whenever they want. As a teenager, he give himself much freedom and like to find many ways and means to satisfy his thirst. However, the consequences that follow some of his initiatives are enormous and very preoccupying. The reasons that motivate them are most of time the fruit of immaturity and disrespect of parent's advice. Many writers and scholars come to the same conclusions.

The first case of parental disobedience I would like to share with you is about Trito in *the stubborn girl* an instructive short story by Beninese playwright Jean Pliya [1]. Trito is a charming and mischievous young girl who does everything wrong and who has a malicious pleasure in breaking the taboos and desecrating what others surround with great respect. One day, in search of wood, despite the remonstrance of her parents, she enters the sacred forest where no one has ever dared to walk. A good illustration is from the following extract:

People are liars' she said. Why do elders always tell nonsense to children? Today I unmask them. She started shouting, "Oh, where are you from the sacred forest?" Oh, show yourself, if not, I will undeceive the king and the sorcerer Zekpete, and let me show you that we can cut and take wood from here. You lied to me in every respect Aziza where you are (Plya 1982)

This mistrust act or simply that disobedience to parents and elders instructions did not stay unpunished. As soon as she had finished her words, the genie of the forest inflicted severe punishment on her. This is illustrated through the following;

As she turned her back, the genie jumped and saw herself on the bundle of wood. He doubled the load of the wood she is carrying. At first she does not notice any change but the more she advanced the load became heavier and heavier and she began to sweat and pant” (Plya 1982)

Adult only tell you not to do something because they are concern for your well-being. You may tell me this is just a tale but it appears from this tale that a child who disobeys his parents runs great dangers.

In Ferdinand Oyono fantastic novel, *a boy's Life*. Toundi, the main protagonist of the novel disobeys his parents and to Father Gilbert at the Catholic Mission. His misfortune began at the death of his protector. This has fulfilled the preaching of his mother: *Toundi, your greed, will lead you far* (Oyono1956). The arrival of a new Patron's wife, who discover that he has been there because he disobey, decided to put him in trouble. He became the first enemy to finish with whatever the price. He must disappear because he is an unwanted. He would obey his parents that he would not be victims of his ill-treatment. This disobedience led to the breakdown of family ties. Witness his state of victim. *My parents are dead. I never turned around to village* (Oyono1956). This disobedience is the main cause of Toundi's death.

Parental disobedience through Robinson Crusoe

On the first chapters of *Robinson Crusoe* Daniel Defoe's, present the main protagonist in a family discussion. Crusoe commits what he calls his "Original Sin" he categorically reject his father's advice to join the family business and prefer to become a sailor. His great will was to be on sea. He decided against the will of his father to follow his friend father's in a perilous journey. Crusoe succumbs to temptation and boards the ship that boat. Unfortunately, a storm develops and their boat wrecked. While trying to save himself from total destruction he remembered his father's word '*if you don't listen to me then that would be your destiny*' This famous prediction of his father would be like a curse for Robinson. Each moment he faces some difficulties his father prosthetic words come to his mind. The ship nearly founders, but the crew was saved. Crusoe sees this ordeal as a sign of fate that he should give up sea travel, and his friend's father warns him against setting foot on a ship again, echoing his own father is warning. In a telling conversation between Crusoe and the captain, the captain said:

"if you do not go back, wherever you go, you will meet with nothing but disasters and disappointments, till your father's words are fulfilled upon you."(Course Hero 2016)

Crusoe did not respect this warning from the captain. Back to London, Crusoe meets another sea captain who proposes him to come with him on an upcoming merchant voyage. Writing to his family for investment money, Crusoe sets off with forty pounds worth of trinkets and toys to sell abroad. Crusoe makes a net income of 300 pounds from this trip, and considers it a great success. Taking one hundred pounds with him, and leaving the remaining 200 pounds with a widow whom he trusts, Crusoe sets off on another merchant expedition. This time Moorish pirates off the coast of Sallee in North Africa pursue him. His ship is overtaken, and he is enslaved and assigned the task of fishing because of his natural skill. (Crusoe, 1719)

From adventure to adventure, Crusoe faces difficulties, problems, make friends and becomes very rich but is not happy. He went back home after twenty-eight years far from his

family. He got married in London; still he seems indifferent to his wife, whose name he does not even bother to tell us. In short, with “no family” and “not many relations,” and with little interest in forging new relationships, Crusoe appears almost as isolated in England as he does on his island. One again Defoe is drawing our attention on the importance of family. Crusoe’s defiance of his father is one that haunted him until his repentance, atonement, and conversion to Christianity.

Crusoe’s experiences constitute not simply an adventure story in which thrilling things happen, but also a moral tale illustrate the right and wrong ways to live one’s life. Crusoe needs repentance most, as he learns from the fiery angelic figure that comes to him during a feverish hallucination and says, “Seeing all these things have not brought thee to repentance, now thou shalt die.” Crusoe believes that his major sin is his rebellious behavior toward his father, which he refers to as his “original sin,” akin to Adam and Eve’s first disobedience of God.(Shmoop Editorial Team)

People perception of Parental disobedience

To deepen the research and show the importance for young men to obey their parents I carried out field work consisting in distributing a questionnaire to people of my surrounding from both sex and from different generations. The average age is from sixteen and above. Sixteen because Crusoe was sixteen when he went against his father will and above sixteen, because he got time to experience where his disobedience lead him. To realize it, I have distributed my questionnaire to two hundred people in Parakou. The table below show details of the collected data.

N°	Questions	Answers	Number of People	Percentage
01	Is it important to obey parents?	Yes	200	100%
		No	00	00%
02	Do you think parental disobedience implies Consequences?	Yes	00	00%
		No	100	100%
03	Do we have to always obey parents?	Yes	70	70%
		No	30	30%
04	Can parental disobedience’s consequences have impact on future actions and project?	Yes	95	95%
		No	5	5%
05	Can repentance erase consequences of parental disobedience?	Yes	20	97%

		No	80	3%
--	--	----	----	----

Source: Summary data from distributed questionnaires

Analysis of collecting information

The first question I put in my questionnaire is “Is it important to obey parents?” From the answers I have collected, it appear that to the absolute majority the interviewee believe that it is very important to obey parents. To the question, “Do you think parental disobedience implies consequence?” two hundred out of two hundred interviewees say “Yes” making 100%. Meaning that they believe that disobedience is not without consequences. Some of them witness that it can have irreversible consequences. The third question I ask the interviewees are state as followed “do we have to always obey our parents?” the answer I got is a little surprising. 70% of the interviewees answered by a “Yes” and 30% said “No”. Some of the interviewees think that whatever the cases children have to fully obey their parents while on the contrary, some of them think that depending on the case and the situation children can disobey their parents. To the question, Can parental disobedience’s consequences have impact on future actions and project?” 95% say “Yes” and only 5% said “No”. Meaning that disobedience can have some consequences in the present and future action of young men. The last question I formulated is “Can repentance erase consequences of parental disobedience?” The answer I got is 50 % of “yes” and 50% of “No”.

Interpretation of the above results

The issue of parental disobedience is a crucial issue that we all are concerned. Far from transforming my paper into a religious sermon, I would say that parental obedience is compulsory by nature. In my researches and reading as well as what I know about religions in the world, I could not any religion where kids are taught and encourage to disrespect or disobey their parents. So parental disobedience is punished by nature. A well illustration of this is the life of the main protagonist of Crusoe. He regretted all his deeds and decided to repent and ask for forgiveness. Parents brought you in life, feed you, protected and guided you and helped you when you were helpless and unconscious of life dangers. Your duty whatever you are and whatever your age if you still have your parents alive, you should show them love, respect and you own then full obedience. “If you don’t listen to me that will be your destiny,” Robinson’s father said, this came to be true when you look back to the numerous adventures of Crusoe.

When I ask my interviewees whether repentance erase consequences of parental disobedience, the answer I got is 50 % of “yes” and 50% of “No”. I was really surprise but I hope they all are Wright. My opinion is that the consequences of any disobedience would just teach you and make you renounce to such a behavior. If you had, the opportunity to see Crusoe he would tell you that he is in total regret of his ignorance of his father. You can ask for forgiveness and repentance but it would be hard to erase your past actions. You may have been given a second chance if you promise not to repeat your sins but this just my perception. The consequences from your disobediences could affect your present and future project. Robinson came back home after twenty-eight years of adventure, became rich, got married but was not happy and had no family link. He found it hard to live with his wife and finally decided to stay in

a Monastery. As people say, “the consequence of our acts teach us more than the acts themselves. Let us keep obeying and honoring our elders and parents, this could clear the way for brighter future.

CONCLUSION

Obeying your parent can sometimes be a very different thing to do. Your parents might tell you not to do something, but instead you disobey and did it anyway to pay the consequence later. The reason for disobeying is that as a child you are so eager to have fun that you do not listen when adults tell you not to do something. Adult only tell you not to do something because they are concern for your well-being. Disobeying your parents can put you in bad situation, which can leave you to pay the consequences later.

This Edwin Louis Cole quote about Parental Disobedience sum up very well what I have said so far. From Trito in *the stubborn girl* and Toundi in *a boy's life* down to *Robinson Crusoe* each of the protagonist reaped what he sowed. what you have to do is to keep in mind that never will your parents let you down if you do respect them, obey and honor them the way you should.

REFERENCES

- Course Hero. (2016, September 15). **Robinson Crusoe Study Guide**. In Course Hero. Retrieved September 1, 2019, from <https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Robinson-Crusoe/>
- Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe* 1719. London
- Ferdinand OYONO, *A boy's Life*, 1956, Cameroon
- Jean Plya, *The stubborn Girl*, The New African Editions, 1982, pp -14-16
- Shmoop Editorial Team. "Robinson Crusoe Themes." *Shmoop*. Shmoop University, Inc., 11 Nov. 2008. Web. 1 Sep. 2019.